4: Landor T-5 (ca. 1890) 1893 AB6 Ainu AB6

yellow, or brightly-coloured handkerchief, of Russian manufacture, is tied round the neck and another round the back of the head, and this makes the women look like Italian peasants. As the gown is worn usually loose it has the identical shape of a dressing-gown; it is ornamented with yellow feathers of puffins round the neck and the edge. Both men and women wear either moccasins, or long boots made of sealskin, with the fur inside, or else they wear salmon-skin boots, like the Ainu of Yezo. No woman that I saw at Shikotan had a moustache tattooed round her lips, or any tattoo marks on her arms. Very few of them wore earrings, though all had the ears bored for that purpose, and had worn them. The earrings which they possessed were mostly strings of coral beads and metal ornaments of Russian manufacture, which, like the brightly-coloured handkerchiefs, they had received in bartering with the crew of a sealing schooner. Since they have been at Shikotan the men have been presented with old caps and overcoats, similar to those of the Japanese police. Previous to this, however, when the Kuriles were under the rigid Russian *régime*, the Kurilsky Ainu men were compelled to trim their hair and beard, which was the first step taken by the priests of the Coptic Church in Christianising these nomadic barbarians. When this hair-dressing order was complied with, as the first link of the chain, the Coptic creed was enforced on them, and the barbarous Kurilsky Ainu became well-trimmed orthodox Christians.

At Shikotan, as it is, fishing on a small scale is their main occupation, praying the next, and Jacko, the chief of the village, is the high priest. Jacko's predecessor, in fulfilling the duties of this high post, was a man who had dropped his Ainu name, and had been baptized as Alexandrovitch. His house is now occupied by Jacko. It is the first on the right-hand side when the village is entered from the harbour side, and it is larger than any of the others; it is built of wood instead of rushes and reeds. The interior is divided into two rooms, and in the second are three stands, the middle one of which has a cross on it. On each of these stands is a Russian Bible, with images hanging on the page-marks. Several rough stools and a couple of benches are placed in rows in front of these stands, and on the walls hang two

4: Landor T-5 (ca. 1890)1893 AB6 Ainu AB6

or three Russian religious images. Taken altogether, and compared with other Ainu huts, Jacko's chapel had quite a stately appearance.

Just as the Ainu of Yezo have partly acquired the Japanese language, the Kurilsky Ainu have learned to talk Russian, besides speaking an Ainu dialect.

On Sundays, or on any day which Jacko thinks is a Sunday, the chief reads the mass before a congregation of the other fifty-nine hairy Christians of the Russian Orthodox Church; he does not spare them a sermon, which sometimes lasts half the day, and his audience are most attentive and well behaved. None of them would think of leaving church before service is over; but one detail in which these hairy Christians are not yet fully Christianised is, that no collection plate is ever sent round! The Kurilsky Ainu have undoubtedly accepted the form of their adopted religion, but I rather doubt whether they have fallen in with the principle. Their former barbarian ideas and superstitions are still well rooted in their brain, and each individual was a curious and enviable combination of a perfect heathen and a thorough Christian, according to what suited him or her better at the time being. In other words, they believed in two diametrically opposed principles, one of which fitted in with every phase of their life when the other was deficient.

As many as ninety people, all told, were landed at Shikotan, but thirty had already succumbed when I visited the island. A graveyard on a hill on the west side of the village was indeed a sad reminder of this fact. It will not be long before all the others will pass away, for consumption and rheumatism have a great hold on most of the wretches. In ten years from now, I dare say, not one of the Kurilsky tribe of Ainu will be left on this earth. It is pitiful that the last remains of these independent people will end their days secluded and in exile on the barren rocks of Shikotan.

As it is, they seem to take life easily, and, with a characteristic proper to all nomadic peoples, they make the best of what they can get. They are not shy, and they have dropped the formalities and grand salutations of other Ainu. They are, however, as dirty, especially in their homes. The women dress their hair in small tresses.

7:Munro & Seligman D. E-4. 5 (ca. 1900-1942) 1963
AB6 Ainu AB6

I

FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to describe any aspect of Ainu life without reference to ritual practices. The Ainu were, and many still are, saturated with animistic beliefs and these beliefs lead them to have recourse to ritual on so many occasions that some understanding of their relations with the spirit world is necessary for an adequate description of any aspect of their life. Social organization, hearth and home, hunting and fishing, festivals, disease, psychic ailments, medicines, birth, death and funeral observances—all demand some special reference to religious and magical procedures. To the Ainu all life is based on established beliefs, most of which involve supplication to the spirit powers in which they trust. In the present chapter I shall deal with these fundamental ideas, and follow this with a brief description of the usual methods of securing good will and help while reserving for later chapters details of particular rites designed to assist the good spirits in resisting evil.

The Ainu have no priesthood; the head of the family carries out the traditional ritual, and the home is the place of worship.

Three Ainu words indicate the main features of Ainu religion: *ramat*, *kamui* and *inau*. The significance of the two former is somewhat variable, but the first always, and the second usually, refers to invisible spirit powers. The third, *inau* (offering), is a hand-made object, a stick to which shavings are attached. It is made as an offering to a *kamui* (god or spirit), and is itself sacred. There is a great variety of these *inau*; they play an important part in Ainu life and ritual and will be described in detail later. A group of these